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Alternatives to 'Containment'

TO THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR:

Despite the "curtain of silence" drawn by many of the columnists and most of the editors of the metropolitan press, now that knowledge of the failure of the "containment" policy is finally filtering through to the public, perhaps you will publish a few observations concerning this policy, first announced by George F. Kennan, Foreign Affairs, July, 1947, in an article entitled "Sources of Soviet Conduct."

Walter Lippmann immediately replied in a series of articles in the New York Herald Tribune, that the policy, if adopted, would prove beyond our capabilities and accordingly would surrender the initiative in the worldwide struggle to the Soviet bloc.

We have for a long time been offering and supplying arms to many countries—large and small, democratic and totalitarian, "free" and "slave"—any, in fact, that would join with us or our other allies in the "cold war" against the Soviet bloc. We even offered arms to Egypt under these terms. All obviously in pursuance of the "containment" policy. India protested vigorously over the arms supplied to Pakistan by us, as did Israel over those to Iraq.

Why then should anyone be surprised that Czechoslovakia, given the opportunity, should join the arms "peddling" business, or doubt she would be given that opportunity eventually?

What informed person really expects the Russians to agree to German unification with the whole incorporated into NATO? What have democratic elections, one may ask, to do with power politics under the balance of power theory of the nation-state system? Certainly they would have none with us if they involved our vital interest. What causes us to think then that we can properly protest acts similar to our own when committed by others; or prove convincing by crying "surprise" and pretending "alarm" over events which any one could have easily predicted?

The "containment" policy makes at least three assumptions which seem to me fundamentally erroneous. First, it assumes that the difficulties plaguing the world arise from communism per se instead of communism arising from these

difficulties: poverty, ignorance, and bigotry.

Second, it assumes that the Soviet challenge is primarily a military one. It can probably be shown that many nations have a vested interest in this assumption—if there were no Communists the "cold-war" agitators would have to invent some.

Third, it assumes that all nations outside the Soviet bloc have the same causes for fear of and equal reasons for opposing communism. When, in fact, Pakistan fears India, Korea fears Japan, Israel fears Egypt, France fears Germany, Greece now fears Turkey; yes, and nationalism continues to fear colonialism, even more than any one of them fears communism itself. These differences cannot easily be reconciled or their governments fused into an effective military alliance, even if such an alliance could achieve the real objective—security.

NATO, SEATO, ANZUS et al, had they been in existence, might and probably would have either delayed or prevented World War II, but they are almost certain to fail to contain communism now. Two-thirds to three-fourths of the human race want and demand adequate food, shelter, clothing, and education. And they want these now. United Nations Technical Assistance, Point Four, UNICEF, and UNESCO make better vessels for achieving these purposes than do bombs and airplanes, naval craft and military alliances.

For these reasons, I believe, the sooner the foreign policy-makers of this country not only recognize "containment" for what it really is—the diplomatic counterpart of the "Maginot" Line—but also take positive steps inside the United Nations to develop a stable economic and political world as suggested here, the better for the peace and security of all.

And it is important to remember that a bipartisan foreign policy in itself is no substitute for a sound one. And if it proves an erroneous one as "containment" appears to have, it compounds the danger by giving the illusion of strength through the appearance of unity. Since it is already late, no more time should be lost in beginning a "great debate" on foreign

policy.
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